

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

1700 W. Washington Street, Room 164
Phoenix, AZ 85007



Phone: (602) 364-3080
Fax: (602) 364-3089

September 18, 2008

The Honorable Jim Weiers
State House of Representatives
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Mr. Speaker:

At its July 28, 2008 meeting, the State Board for Charter Schools reviewed new school finance guidelines from the Arizona Department of Education and considered the impact of these guidelines on charter schools in Arizona. The Board determined that action was appropriate and established a policy related to alternative calendars and an Alternative Calendar Notification Request. This action provides Charter Holders a means to document their ability to operate on a schedule other than a traditional school day.

Many charter schools offer flexibility in scheduling and additional opportunities during a school week to attend and/or make up regularly scheduled class time. The reporting of daily absences, as required by the new ADE Guideline and Procedure outlining the Absence Reporting Requirement (GE 20), did not provide an opportunity for schools to report attendance during these nontraditional times.

Because the restrictive guideline was developed without any legislative directive or policy change, the Board operated within its statutory authority to provide a mechanism for schools that choose to operate on an alternative calendar to provide instruction and report attendance accordingly. Specifically, A.R.S. § 15-797.D states a charter high school operating on an approved alternative calendar may count pupils as having attended full time in any week for which the pupil was enrolled in and physically attended at least twenty hours of instruction during that week. Further, A.R.S. § 15-901.A.2(c)(vi) defines a full time instructional program to include one or more subjects taught in amounts of time totaling at least 20 hours per week. Lastly, all schools in Arizona must provide for a minimum of one hundred eighty days of instruction as defined in A.R.S. § 15-341.01. While the debate regarding the required amount of instructional time is one that the Board members felt was an appropriate policy discussion, the consensus was that this issue was appropriate for public discussion by a legislative body if changes were deemed necessary.

We felt this item would be of interest to you and would be happy to provide any additional information upon request. Please feel free to contact me at 602-364-3091.

Sincerely,

DeAnna Rowe
Executive Director

cc: Brian Lockery, Senior Policy Advisor

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

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September 18, 2008

President Tim Bee
State Senate
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Mr. President:

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Sincerely,

DeAnna Rowe
Executive Director

cc: Michael Hunter, Senate Majority Budget Policy Advisor
Javan Mesnard, Senate Majority Education Policy Advisor
Dawn Wallace, Senate Education Analyst

"To foster accountability in charter schools, which will improve student achievement through market choice."

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The Honorable Marsha Arzberger
State Senate
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Senator Arzberger:

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Sincerely,

DeAnna Rowe
Executive Director

cc: Chris Kotterman, Senate Minority Education Policy Advisor

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September 18, 2008

The Honorable Karen Johnson
State Senate
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Senator Johnson:

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DeAnna Rowe
Executive Director

cc: Javan Mesnard, Senate Majority Education Policy Advisor
Dawn Wallace, Senate Education Analyst

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The Honorable Mark Anderson
State House of Representatives
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Representative Anderson:

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DeAnna Rowe
Executive Director

cc: Jennifer Anderson, Education Research Analyst